

City of Chandler Mayor's Youth Commission

Teen Town Hall 2010 Report



Chandler City Council

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Mayor's Youth Commission 2009-10

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Teen Town Hall

Hosted by the City of Chandler Mayor's Youth Commission



Schedule

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Arrival and Registration Cotton Room South
8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Opening Session - Cotton Room North Special Guest Speakers: Mayor Boyd Dunn Carl Boyd Team-building activity
9:25 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Committee Sessions Education – Art Studio Health and Fitness – Classroom Teen Drug Use – Ceramic Studio Teen Pregnancy – Meeting Room
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided) - McDowell Pavilion
12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	Committee Sessions Resume
1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Presentations - Cotton Room North
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Closing Session

Within the committee sessions, participants will be divided into groups and given an issue that affects local teens today. Teen Town Hall aims for these groups to propose an effective plan or solution for the given issue. The recommendations will then be compiled into a report given to Mayor and Council for their consideration. Our goal is to immerse high school students in the local government action process and to expose them to issues affecting teens today and how they can create solutions for them.

The Mayor's Youth Commission sponsored its second Teen Town Hall on Thursday, April 1, 2010 at the Tumbleweed Recreation Center. The purpose of the Teen Town Hall is to bring together teens from the community to discuss issues of concern to Chandler's teens and offer recommendations for practical solutions the community can implement. To ensure input from all sectors of our community, all private and public high schools within the City of Chandler were invited to participate.

The Teen Town Hall began with Amy Umaretiya, Chair of the Mayor's Youth Commission, welcoming the participants and then introducing Mayor Boyd W. Dunn. Mayor Dunn addressed the participants, stating he was excited to see their interest and involvement in the event. He encouraged the participants to engage in the day's activities and said he looked forward to the presentation of the Teen Town Hall Report at a future City Council meeting. Mayor Dunn's speech was followed by a keynote address by Carl Boyd, a member of the Chandler community and educator for forty-five years. An energizing team-building activity led by Abel Mendoza, Recreation Coordinator I for the City of Chandler, concluded the opening session. Participants were then divided into four committee sessions covering different topics including: **Education, Health and Wellness, Teen Pregnancy, and Teen Drug Use.**

Participants met in their groups and began discussion of their assigned topics by defining the problem and possible contributing factors. The groups were then asked to focus on solutions to correct the issue and develop practical recommendations that could be easily implemented in the City of Chandler.

In the closing session, a teen spokesperson from each of the discussion groups presented their committee's recommendations to all the Town Hall participants. Each teen presented a topic, one to three recommendations, how these recommendations were to be carried out and who should implement the suggestions. These presentations provided attendees the opportunity to gain understanding and insight from each other.

The Teen Town Hall report is available to various agencies, organizations, clubs and schools for review and is to be used as a resource in our community. The Teen Town Hall provides both teens and adults the opportunity to communicate openly with each other about important issues that affect them.

Education

Discussion Summary:

The discussions focused on preparing high school students for college and careers after graduation. Top issues identified were time, awareness, and opportunity. Discussion moved on to why these issues kept students from being prepared to enter college or a career upon graduation. Key reasons included: students had a hard time finding the time to look into their options after high school due to schedule conflicts with class and extra curricular activities. Opportunity and guidance to focus on their future is limited during high school. The group also thought that students are unaware of the resources they are able to explore to find relevant information regarding financial aid, career exploration, and assistance with the research of colleges and finding the right match for them. The group recommended ways to assist students with their preparation in pursuing college and careers after high school by providing the necessary resources in the form of a class curriculum. The recommendation is to require sophomores to attend a mandatory semester college and career exploration class.

Recommendations:

1. Add a mandatory college and career exploration semester for sophomore students throughout in the Chandler Unified School District.

The goal is to provide necessary information to high school students so they make comfortable and informed decisions about career and college plans. The semester would allow students the opportunity to dedicate time to make informed decisions about their future. To implement this recommendation, Chandler Unified School District would work with members of the Education and Career Action Plan Committee and the Career and Technical Education program to provide funding and a curriculum change to allow the class.

Addressing Education

Facilitators:

Rebecca Clark, Basha High School Counselor
Nancy Spilsbury, Basha High School Counselor
Claire Johnson, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Teen Participants

Melissa Beck, Basha High School
Payton Collins, Basha High School
Jaron Diehl, Hamilton High School
Megan Ealy, Basha High School
Emilee Eikren, Perry High School
Rudy Escobedo, El Dorado High School
Simon Gutierrez, El Dorado High School
Abigail Howman, Chandler High School
Crystal Li, Hamilton High School
Ali Muller, Chandler High School
Matthew Richardson, Basha High School
Maria Riviera, El Dorado High School

Health and Wellness

Discussion Summary:

Discussion group began by identifying contributing factors that lead to obesity and unhealthy choices by teens. The factors identified were the food choices, cost, eating disorders, technology, self-esteem, and lack of exercise. Available resources were discussed and identified as possible recommendations to help combat obesity and improve choices made by teens. The recommendations included mandating an additional physical education class in high school, diversifying physical activity in schools, offering smaller and healthier food choices during school, and organizing fitness rallies.

Recommendations:

1. Update the health curriculum by requiring students to take two years of physical education.

Currently the Chandler Unified School District requires students to complete one year of physical education. However, increasing this requirement to two years would give teens a reason to exercise regularly, which would decrease the obesity level in teens and give teens a healthy habit to take with them into adulthood. To make this recommendation effective, the elimination of summer and online physical education classes would be required. To implement a change in graduation requirements, a committee of students, parents, teachers, and administrators will be formed to approach the school district to make an official request. To implement this recommendation, Chandler Unified School District would need to consider reorganizing current course structure and possibly reallocate funds.

2. Diversify physical activity in schools.

Students may not participate in an extracurricular sports activity for many reasons such as cost, time, or may not feel they have the skills to join a team. To encourage physical activity, there should be programs like open gym or weight training programs offered to students after school. School administrators would find staff for these programs and the students would be asked to pay a small fee at the beginning of the year to help offset the cost. This program would be implemented by the Chandler Unified School District.

3. Offer smaller portions and healthier food choices in schools.

Many of the food choices at school are not healthy and the portion sizes encourage high calorie intake. The healthier choices offered also cost more. Schools should remove the non-healthy choices and reevaluate portion size of each item. The money saved on eliminating the non-healthy food and the reduction in portion size would allow the Chandler Unified School District to adjust the lunch menus to provide healthy food and portion size.

4. Schools host fitness rallies.

Either once a quarter or semester, students would participate in a schoolwide fitness event. The rallies would address healthy living, give all students a chance to exercise and increase motivation to exercise. Students would be eligible to win prizes, which would be donated by local businesses. The Chandler Unified School District would implement these rallies by partnering with local business, schools, and sports teams such as Sports Authority, Sports Chalet, Diamondbacks, Cardinals, Chandler-Gilbert Community College and Arizona State University.

Addressing Health and Wellness

Facilitators:

Chief Ken Hill, Former Andersen Jr. High School Vice-Principal
Christian Reusche, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Youth Participants

Falicia Baron, Basha High School
Eric Barta, Hamilton High School
Samantha Clark, Basha High School
Astrid Eskridge, Chandler High School
Allison Fassinger, Chandler High School
Alycia Hanratty, Basha High School
Kathy Lee, Hamilton High School
Drew Stout, Basha High School
Katrina VanKlompberg, Perry High School
Joshua Vasquez, El Dorado High School

Teen Drug Use

Discussion Summary:

The discussion group began by discussing how drugs affect teenagers. The main issues were the availability of drugs and the lack of effectiveness of drug education. Teens are using drugs socially and mentally to deal with what is going on in their lives. Drug education is not effective for teens because programs such as D.A.R.E. target elementary age students. The group then focused on solutions to reduce teen drug use. The solutions include prevention programs for junior high and high school age students, increase mandatory drug testing for students, and initiate a media campaign with material teens relate to better.

Recommendations:

1. Provide prevention programs for students in grades six through ten.

Teens are often introduced to drugs at a young age through prevention programs. Continuing drug education while drug availability increases will help teens choose to be drug free. The programs would be a collaboration between the Chandler Unified School District, Chandler Regional Hospital, and the City of Chandler Police Department. Funding for the programs will come from community donations, Chandler Unified School District, Chandler Regional Hospital, and the City of Chandler.

2. Initiate a media campaign regarding more relatable material to teens.

School and City of Chandler media teams will create advertisements about drugs that speak to the teens. The advertisements will broadcast during school announcements, City of Chandler Channel 11, school newspapers, and school newsletters. The purpose of the campaign would be to increase and educate teens about drug use through real life experience. Funding for the programs would come from volunteers as well as donations or use of video equipment by the Chandler Unified School District and City of Chandler.

3. Increase mandatory high school student drug testing.

To deter drug use, the Chandler Unified School District would increase random drug testing to once a month. Parent/guardian permission would be obtained at the beginning of the school year and parents/guardians would be asked to donate \$1 to \$5 to offset the cost. To achieve this solution, collaborations between parent teacher organizations, Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA), and the Chandler Unified School District would work together to come up with testing criteria and funding. The school district would also seek the lowest bid for a drug-testing agency to help reduce costs.

Addressing Teen Drug Use

Facilitators:

Stacy Hettmansperger, Arizona State University Graduate Student
Mark Peng, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Youth Participants

Justin Burns, Basha High School
Rachel Furphy, Basha High School
Brandon Lambert, Basha High School
Greg Lessell, Basha High School

Jazmine Mays, Hamilton High School
Chris Metzger, Hamilton High School
Jeremy Riviera, El Dorado High School
Cynthia Snyder, Basha High School
Briana Waite, Chandler High School

Teen Pregnancy

Discussion Summary:

Group members began discussing what effect pregnancy has on teens and how many teens get pregnant in Arizona each year. Last year, the state of Arizona had the third-highest teen pregnancy rate and is ranked 17th for abortion in the country. There are approximately 12,000 teens giving birth each year and more than half of the births were in Maricopa County. The main issues identified on why teen pregnancy numbers are so high were peer pressure, comprehensive health education, lack of family and financial support, and lack of teen awareness. The group then focused on solutions to reduce teen pregnancy and identified the need for updated health curriculum offered at school.

Recommendations:

1. Restructuring of the existing comprehensive health curriculum at high schools.

Teens enjoy socializing with their peers and receive a lot of information from one another. Offering comprehensive information would reduce the inaccurate information teens receive and change the teens' perception that health class is a waste of time. The curriculum would include contraceptive methods, safe sex, sexually transmitted diseases, the impacts of pregnancy, and human anatomy. To implement this recommendation the Chandler Unified School District, community partners and the Mayor's Youth Commission would work together to update the current curriculum, create a community resource guide, and provide referrals. Funding to restructure the curriculum would come from existing health curriculum funds, community partners such as Catholic Healthcare West and grant opportunities such as the Pepsi Refresh Project.

Addressing Teen Pregnancy

Facilitators:

Lindsey Robertson, Community Education Coordinator - Chandler Regional & Mercy

Gilbert Medical Centers

Katherine Yeh, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Youth Participants

Scott Boisvert, Basha High School

Mikayla Dulaney, Basha High School

Madeline Houston, Basha High School

Natzem Lima, Basha High School

Loreina Main, El Dorado High School

Aashish Masih, Hamilton High School

Zachary Nasipak, Hamilton High School

Shannen Nawrocki, Basha High School

Ann Nguyen, Chandler High School

Jacki Olsen, Chandler High School

Catherine Sobel, Basha High School

The Mayor's Youth Commission would like to extend a special thanks to Einstein Brothers' Bagels and Big Ray's Fresh Deli for their food discounts, Sprout's Farmers Market for their donation used to purchase fruit, and the City of Chandler for providing the use of Tumbleweed Recreation Center for the day's activities and giveaways. These businesses and organizations allowed the Teen Town Hall event to be a success.